Uttar Pradesh for wheat and rice, by West Bengal for rice and by Madhya Pradesh for wheat.

Supply of Foodgrains to Targeted Groups

1979. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the steps taken by Government to ensure that the supplies from the Public Distribution System reach the targeted groups including the people living below poverty line and those under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana families;

(b) whether those living in the drought-hit areas in the country would also be covered by the scheme of PDS; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Public Distribution System (PDS) is operated under the joint responsibility of Central and the State Governments. The Central Government has taken the responsibility for procurement, storage, transportation and bulk allocation at subsidised prices of certain essential items, *viz.*, rice, wheat, sugar, imported edible oils and kerosene. The responsibility of distribution to the consumer through the network of FPSs rests with the State Government. The Government of India has advised the State Governments to substantially involve the Gram Panchayats in the supervision and monitoring of the Public Distribution System, especially at the fair price shop level, as a measure of social audit. The involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of the PDS at the grass root level will make the system transparent and accountable and thereby help in ensuring that the supplies from PDS reach the targeted groups including people living below poverty line and the poorest of poor "Antyodaya" families. The guidelines issued by the Government of India for Antyodaya Anna Yojana provide that the allocation of foodgrains to the States will be linked to the receipt of utilisation certificates from them to the effect that the foodgrains already allocated have actually reached the Antyodaya families.

(b) and (c) The PDS is implemented in all areas including the drought-hit areas in the country.

Non clearance of arrears of sugarcane growers in Andhra Pradesh

1980. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that many sugar mills in Andhra Pradesh have closed down without clearing the arrears of sugarcane price to the sugarcane growers;

(b) if so, the details thereof, mill-wise; and

(c) the action Government propose to take to ensure release of arrears to the growers by such sugar mills?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD): (a) As per information received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh, no sugar mill has closed down in the State without clearing the arrears of sugarcane price to the sugarcane growers.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Starvation deaths despite overflowing godowns

1981. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item captioned, "Save lives, not grains-overflowing godowns do not square with starvation deaths", appearing in the Indian Express, dated 12th May, 2001; and

(b) if so, Government's views and reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government has taken a number of measures to utilize the stocks of foodgrains with it. These include *inter alia*, increase in the